Modern Grimoire Magick: Folk Magick and The Solomonic Path

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The medieval systems of "grimoiric" mysticism (of which the European Solomonic tradition is a part) are outlined in such manuscripts as *The Key of Solomon the King*, the *Goetia*, the *Book of Abramelin*, *The Magus*, etc.[1] The authors of these texts (many of them members of the medieval Catholic Church) drew magickal secrets from the cultures they found around them - such as Jewish *Merkavah Mysticism* and *Qabalah*, classical Gnosticism, Arabic *Sufism* and the rich traditions of European pagan folklore.[2]

The mysticism that evolved among these Christian mages was fairly shamanic. It called upon the Angels and spirits of nature. It described methods of exorcism and acquisition of spirit familiars. Wax images, sacrifices, incantations and necromancy all proved a marked pagan influence on the texts. Yet, they were unquestionably the work of devout Christians, who invoked the name of Jesus, used standard Christian prayers (such as the *Pater Noster* and the Psalms) as magickal spells, and presented a blatantly Christian mythos.

The Solomonic mystics were unique because they were among the first humans in history to have access to the technology of paper and bound books.[3] (They were very often scholars, scientists or scribes.) Therefore, they naturally recorded much of their tradition into manuscripts called textbooks or “grammars” (French: *grimoire*). The appearance of these grimoires shocked Roman Catholic and many Protestant authorities so deeply, it triggered the Inquisitions and mass book burnings. What we know of Solomonic mysticism today comes largely from the grimoiric manuscripts that survived.

After the Inquisitions, the Age of Enlightenment dawned in Europe. The surviving grimoires had vanished into private

collections and museum archives - mostly guarded by the Masons as occult curiosities. There was the odd scholar or quasi-Masonic group (most of them students of Hermeticism) who discovered the texts and made use of some of the material. You might recognize many of the names - Elias Ashmole, "Dr. Rudd", Francis Barrett, MacGregor Mathers and Aleister Crowley are just a few. However, few of them practiced the texts on their own terms. The more pagan elements of the grimoires vanished, and the mark of Masonic lodge-style magick was eventually imprinted upon them.

Today, there are many ceremonial groups that make limited use of the Solomonic material - most of them descended from or influenced by a late Victorian quasi-Masonic lodge called the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. There have even been a number of modern Orders that focus entirely on the grimoires,[4] though even they are influenced by post-Golden Dawn magickal methodology. Toward the end of the 20th Century, several books were released that present methods for summoning Angels and spirits based upon (or influenced by) Golden Dawn techniques.[5]

While the modern ceremonial systems may draw names, sigils and talismans from the medieval grimoires, the techniques they utilize are no older than the late 1800s - and in some cases are even younger. The grimoires are not composed of lodge-style ceremonial magick. You'll find no "Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram" in the *Key of Solomon the King*. You will not see instructions in the *Goetia* to inscribe geometric figures in the air. No Tarot-based Elemental Weapons or Lotus Wands are found anywhere in the vast corpus of medieval Solomonic literature.

At the time I wrote my book on grimoire magick, I was operating under the impression that the "living grimoiric tradition" - as recorded by the medieval mages themselves- had long-since ceased to exist. I focused strictly upon the historical European Solomonic tradition, along with suggestions for following a similar path in the modern world. (In fact, I was hoping my book would help to re-ignite the Solomonic tradition, and provide a textbook – grimoire - for it.)

However, over the past several years, I have discovered that I was fundamentally wrong about the passing of the "living grimoiric tradition." It was not stamped out by the Church, nor has it been dead and buried in Masonic vaults for the past 400 years! Indeed, it survived the inquisitions, migrated to the New World with European immigrants, and - true to its shamanic nature - mutated to a new form. It has been with us right here in America for nearly as long as the nation has existed - and it is currently becoming part of a larger occult revival. I have been shocked to discover just how many people are currently out there really working with this material! Their procedures may or may not differ from what I describe in my book. I may or may not always agree with their philosophies about the magick. Yet, one way or the other, they are using the old methods and getting results.

Thus, contrary to what you may read in my previous work, the Solomonic tradition is alive and growing today. In this essay, I will trace this slightly mutated "grimoiric" trend from Europe to the New World (both New England and the American South), and finally discuss how it is currently affecting aspirants searching for the Solomonic path. Overall, I hope to give the reader a solid impression of what it means when someone - right here in the modern world - calls him or herself a "Solomonic magician."

European Folk Magick in the New World

The medieval Solomonic grimoires are, in fact, a sub-set of a larger literary genre - the folkloric "receipt-book." (The word "receipt", used in this sense, is an archaic form of the word "recipe.") A receipt-book was a hand-written journal of family and local folklore, passed down from generation to generation.

The typical receipt-book contained such things as agricultural lore, cleaning tips, beauty aids and "home remedy" medicinal secrets. For an example of such domestically-useful content, take this recipe for a plaster that aids healing:

A Very Good Plaster.[6]
I doubt, very much whether any physician in the United States can make a plaster equal to this. It heals the white swelling, and has cured the sore leg of a woman who for eighteen years had

used the prescriptions of doctors in vain.

Take two quarts of cider, one pound of bees-wax, one pound of sheep-tallow, and one pound of tobacco; boil the tobacco in the cider till the strength is out, and then s train it, and add the other articles to the liquid: stir it over a gentle fire till all is dissolved.

Or this recipe for curing fatigue:

Another Remedy for Weakness[7]

Take Dittany and St. John's wort, and put them in good old rye whiskey. To drink some of this in the morning before having taken anything else, is very wholesome and good. A tea made of the acorns of the white oak is very good for weakness of the limbs.

The receipt-books also contained occult lore - in the form of incantations, spells and simple conjurations. Depending on the source, this occultism is variously known as European folk magick, witchcraft or "collections of local superstitions." For example, here is a folk remedy for the fever:

How to Banish the Fever.[8]

Write the following words upon a paper and wrap it up in knot-grass, (breiten megrich,) and then tie it upon the body of the person who has the fever:

Potmat sineat,

Potmat sineat,

Potmat sineat.

Or, how about this helpful hint for ranchers:

Another Way to Make Cattle Return Home.[9]

Feed your cattle out of a pot or kettle used in preparing your dinner, and they will always return to your stable!

There are also more involved spells, which should sound very familiar to any student of the Solomonic tradition:

To Prevent Bad People From Getting About the Cattle.[10]

Take wormwood, gith, five-finger weed, and assafœtida; three cents' worth of each; the straw of horse beans, some dirt swept together behind the door of the stable and a little salt. Tie these all up together with a tape, and put the bundle in a hole about the threshold over which your cattle pass in and out, and cover it well with lignum-vitæ wood. This will certainly be of use.

This kind of magick was a hold-over from the paganism that existed in Europe before the domination of the Church. While the pagan religions themselves may have been destroyed, local and family traditions and folklore often survived. Many of them simply adapted to the new Christian environment. By the time the receipt-books were penned, Biblical scripture and prayers to Jesus and Saints had become intermixed with the older pagan material:

Another Well-Tried Charm Against Firearms.[11]

Blessed is the hour in which Jesus Christ was born; blessed is the hour in which Jesus Christ was born; blessed is the hour in which Jesus Christ was born; blessed is the hour in which Jesus Christ has arisen from the dead; blessed are these three hours over thy gun, that no shot or ball shall fly toward me, and neither my skin, nor my hair, nor my blood, nor my flesh be injured by them, and that no kind of weapon or metal shall do me any harm, so surely

as the Mother of God shall not bring forth another son. + + + Amen.

At the same time, aspects of Judeo-Christian occultism (such as we see in the Solomonic grimoires) were incorporated into the receipt-books. Perhaps the best example of this is the famous SATOR/ROTAS magickal square:

S A T O R
A R E P O
T E N E T
O P E R A
R O T A S

We have seen this square on Solomonic talismans, and a (slightly altered) version even appears in the *Book of Abramelin*.[12] Meanwhile, the lesser-known receipt-books grant this talisman various powers. If written on either side of a plate and cast into a fire, it can extinguish the flames without water. If written on paper, ground up and added to cattle's feed, it will protect the beasts from evil witchcraft. If built into the structure of a door or window, it will keep evil spirits from entering.[13]

Another folk remedy for the fever should be familiar to students of European occultism:

To Banish Convulsive Fevers.[14]
Write the following letters on a piece of white paper, Pew it on a piece of linen or muslin, and hang it around the neck until the fever leaves you:

A b a x a C a t a b a x
A b a x a C a t a b a x
A b a x a C a t a b a
A b a x a C a t a b
A b a x a C a t a
A b a x a C a t
A b a x a C a

A b a x a C
A b a x a
A b a x
A b a

A b

This talisman is obviously adapted from the "Abracadabra" formula, which adopts its principal from Qabalistic philosophies on the power of words. The fever is symbolically linked to the word "Abracadabra" (or, in this case, "Abaxacatabax"), and should diminish as the letters of the word are reduced one by one. (Most folks are familiar with "Abracadabra" because stage-magicians in the early 1900s - who sometimes claimed real occult power -

adopted the word into their acts.)
The receipt-books were grimoires in every sense of the word- and were sometimes known as "wonder-books." In fact, it could be said that the Solomonic grimoires were merely the receipt-books (or wonder-books) of one group of medieval Christian mystics.

Once the Inquisitioners had finished searching for grimoires on the shelves of their clergy, they began seeking out the local healers and midwives who often had receipt-books of their own. (From this grew the legends of "witch-burning" that characterize the Inquisition to this day.)

It was this atmosphere of religious persecution throughout Europe that prompted many individuals and entire communities to seek their fortunes in the New World. Those whose faiths were labeled (or bordered upon) "heresy" migrated especially to the colony of Pennsylvania, which had been founded (in 1681 CE by the Quaker William Penn) on the principal of religious freedom. It quickly became a haven for Quakers, Mennonites, Anabaptists and other obscure (and often mystical) religious sects. By 1683, German settlers had established the community of Germantown near Philadelphia - and they brought their receipt-books with them.[15]

Once in the New World, the lore we find recorded in the books combined with Native American herbalism. (The immigrant cunning-folk and healers would have wanted to learn about the local plant life as soon as possible, in order to make necessary medicines and potions.) The information then began to appear in published works in the late 1700s and 1800s. Thanks to mass distribution through mail-order catalogues,[16] books like the *Farmers Almanac*, and John Hohman's *Pow-Wows, or the Long Lost Friend* (first published in German, in 1820, as *Der Lange Verborgene Freund*) became the foundation of the New England folk tradition.

This New England folk tradition is sometimes called Hexcraft - though this may be a modern convention. Alternately, it has been called *braucha* in the Pennsylvania Dutch dialect, *speilwerk* in the German, or "Pow-wow" after the title of John Hohman's book. (He had simply borrowed an Algonquian word for "shaman.")[17]

Practitioners of Pow-wow magick were known by the German term *Hexenmeisters* (spell-masters). Besides their spells and conjurations, they were most famous as herbologists and healers. In most cases, the tradition could only be handed down from a male to a female, or from a female to a male - especially from mother to son. (Modern students of Wiccan history may find that information of interest.)

Receipt-books had been kept within families since the invention of paper and bound books, and they continued to appear even as late as 1950s America. Eventually, the advent of the Industrial Age and the nuclear family destroyed the transmission of such folk wisdom from the older generations to the younger, and the receipt-book finally disappeared.[18] Today, it is unclear how many *hexenmeisters* are left, or whether or not the tradition will be handed down to another generation.

Nonetheless, Mr. Hohman's book eventually became the quintessential American grimoire, and was the principal (but not the only) source of spells for Pow-wowing. (In fact, all of the

above examples of receipt-book folklore were taken from *The Long Lost Friend*.) Another text of importance was *Egyptian Secrets*, (supposedly) by Albertus Magnus, which was one of the main sources for Hohman's book.

Even more interesting for us here, there were several classical grimoires that made it through the Inquisition and across the sea to America. The most important to the Pow-wow tradition were the *Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses*, the *Black Pullet* and possibly the *Goetia* as well. The *hexenmeisters* were not very interested in the purification rites and conjuration ceremonies. Instead, they merely adopted the elaborate seals and sigils - which they charged according to their own tradition. For instance, merely placing a grimoiric seal inside a Bible for seven days was often enough to make it magically viable.

Unfortunately, these classical grimoires were often associated with "black-magick" by Pow-wow healers. Even owning such a book was seen as an indication of satanic influence- and they were strictly avoided by those who wished to present Pow-wow magickal lore as lawful within Christian dogma.[19]

The Magick Moves South: The Hoodoo Tradition

While the European immigrants were bringing their religions and folk magick with them to New England, the slaves were bringing theirs to the South. In places like Cuba, the Caribbean and the American southern states (like Louisiana), we find a strong presence of the African Diaspora religions - such as *Santeria*, *Palo* and *Voodoo* (or Voudoun).

These initiatory shamanic faiths were themselves combinations of the original African religions and elements from religions in the New World. *Santeria* adopted much from Catholicism, so that Saints were invoked as indistinguishable from the African Orishas (gods). Both Santeria and Palo drew from Allan Kardec's Spiritism (an offshoot of Spiritualism) to replace their lost ancestral worship- resulting in the mesa blanca (white table) séances.

It would also appear that, unlike the New England *hexenmeisters*, the Diaspora faiths had no compunction against making use of the European grimoires. [20] For example, at some point, several of the seals from the *Goetia* and related texts were adopted by the Voodoo priests as veves (sigils) for the African *Loas* (gods). [21]

For example, compare the following two sigils. One is from the *Goetia*, representing the spirit Gomori. The other is the Voodoo sigil for the *Loa* Ezili-Freda:

Fig. 1: Duke Gomori

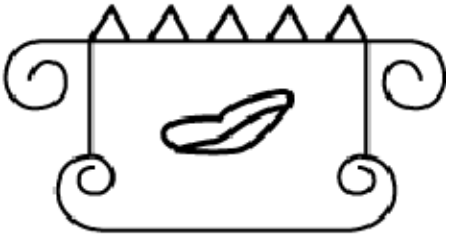

Fig. 2: Loa Ezili Freda

The next example is also from the *Goetia* - the seal of the spirit Marbas. Compare this to the sigil of the *Loa* Ibo:

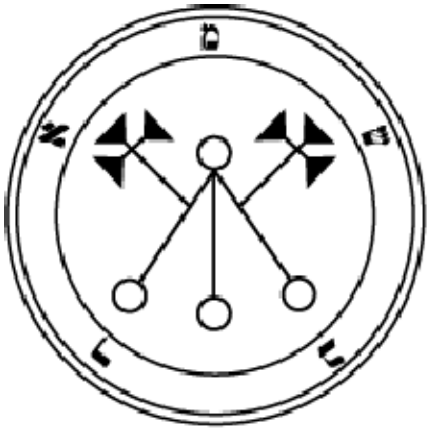

Fig. 3: President Marbas

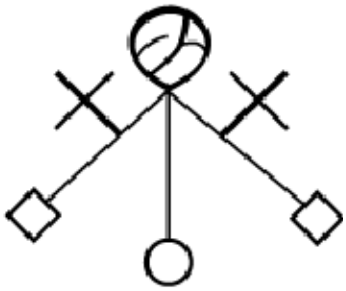

Fig. 4: Loa Ibo

I'll give one final example here - this time the seal is from the grimoire called the *Grimoirum Verum*, representing the spirit

Frucissiere. Corresponding to this, we have the Voodo sigil of the *Loa* Papa-Legba:

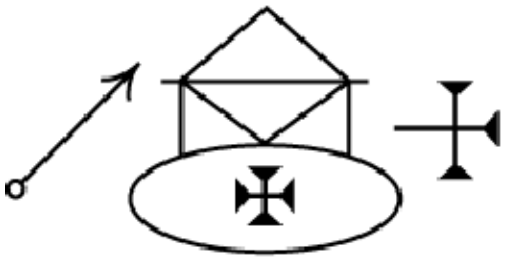

Fig. 5: Spirit Frucissiere

Fig. 6: Papa Legba

As one should expect, these African-descended religions also brought with them a rich tradition of African folk magick. Crossroads magick, "foot track" magick, "laying down tricks", crossing and uncrossing, *gris-gris* or *mojo bags*, ritual sweeping and bathing are all African survivals. And, as usual with folk traditions, these things were not strictly contained within the Diaspora religions. Instead, during the late 19th century, they disseminated among the lay-people as well - intermixing freely with the folklore and occultism of surrounding cultures. Included in the mix were Native American herbalism, Spiritism, European folk magick (especially Pow-wow), and the medieval grimoires.

This new southern American folk tradition was eventually labeled *Hoodoo* - also known as root-working and conjure sorcery.[22] Because of its close ties to Voodoo, Palo, etc, it is often mistaken as a Diaspora religion in its own right. However, Hoodoo is not a religion, nor does one have to be an initiate of any of these religions to practice. Like the Pow-wow tradition, it was taught and practiced by common folk within families or close-knit communities. (Pre-WWII blues music is known for references to Hoodoo - such as *Crossroads Blues* by Robert Johnson and *Hoodoo Lady* by Memphis Minnie.)

Of course, for this essay, we are most interested in the influence of European folklore and occultism on Hoodoo. The southern rootworkers (or root-doctors) were great fans of what they considered "Jewish Kabbalistic" works like Hohman's *The Long*

Lost Friend,[23] Magnus' *Egyptian Secrets* and grimoires like *The Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses*, *The Black Pullet*, *The Key of Solomon the King* and *The Goetia*. In fact, there is some speculation that the term "Hoodoo" may descend from the Latino word *Judio*, pronounced "hoo-dee-oh", and meaning "Jewish." It could easily have come into the culture via Palo, within which is a path named Palo Judio. If this is the origin of the word Hoodoo, then it is likely the practice was named for its association with so-called "Jewish magick"; the medieval grimoires.

However, much as we see with New England folk magick, the southern rootworkers were not interested in the grimoires' ritual instructions - they wanted books with lots of seals and words of power associated with them.[24] These seals were then drawn on paper and placed in sachets, buried in pathways, built into doors, placed upon wounds, etc. - similar to the manner in which the SATOR square is used. They could be empowered via several simple methods such as intonation of their words of power, anointing with oil, recitations of scripture and/or enclosure within a Bible for seven days.

Another European magickal tradition adopted into Hoodoo was the use of the Biblical Psalms as spells or conjurations in their own right.[25] This was largely (but not entirely) thanks to the publication of a text called *Secrets of the Psalms: A Fragment of the Practical Kabala* by Godfrey Selig.[26] (Possibly based upon a medieval Jewish book entitled *Shimmush Tehillim - On the Use of Psalms*.) Selig's book described the Qabalistic philosophy that the Psalms (especially those attributed to King David) contain hidden "seed syllables" that will produce magickal affects if pronounced aloud.

In practice, however, the use of Psalms in Hoodoo magick is much like the conjurations of the Solomonic tradition. The magickal effect produced by the scripture is directly related to the subject-matter of the passage- rather than to Hebrew "seed-syllables."[27]

For instance, if one wants to bring fortune to his home, one might recite Psalm 61 which says:

Thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy. I will abide in Thy tabernacle forever, I will trust in the covert of Thy wings.

If one has need to travel by night, one might invoke protection via Psalm 121 which says:

I will look up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.

For headaches or backaches, one can recite Psalm 3 (traditionally used in exorcism) which contains the line:

Thou, o Lord, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter of my head.

In this manner, Secrets of the Psalms outlines Psalms for numerous uses- such as release from prison, business success, safe childbirth, success in court, defeat of enemies, general protection from evil and more. Psalm magick remains central to Hoodoo practice to this very day.

Hoodoo reached its greatest popularity during the early 1900s - largely thanks to the growing mail-order industry and companies like King Novelty Co., Valmore Beauty Products, the Lucky Heart Co., and R.C. Strong. These companies specialized in beauty products (like Sweet Georgia Brown Hair Pomade, Bleach Cream and Face Powder), cleaning supplies, and "spiritual curios." The spiritual curios are what interest us- the basic components of conjure-spells like roots and herbs, incenses, anointing oils, lodestones and herbal washes.

Within these same catalogues, rootworkers could find such grimoires as *The Long Lost Friend*, *The Black Pullet*, *The Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses*, and the *Secrets of the Psalms*, right alongside of books like *The Art of Kissing*, the *Book of 1000 Ways*

to Get Rich and *The Egyptian Witch Dream Book and Fortune Teller*.

Eventually, an expanding market lead to several new books that blended the European occultism of the grimoires with the growing lore of Hoodoo. Lewis de Claremont[28] released a number of books, among them *The Ten Lost Books of the Prophets*, *The Seven Keys to Power*, and *The Ancients Book of Magic*. Also of particular interest to us is Henry Gamache's *The 8th, 9th and 10th Books of Moses*, which is similar to the older grimoire, but includes a lengthy introduction by the author that links African tribal beliefs with (so-called) anceint Jewish and Egyptian practices.

Henry Gamache also wrote an important Hoodoo book called *The Master Book of Candle Burning*. The folk use of candle burning likely originated in the Catholic practice of lighting votives to the Saints and the dead. Then, thanks to mass-production in the early 1900s, candles of all sorts of shapes and colors became easy to obtain from local drugstores. This led to the central role that candle-burning magick played in Hoodoo.[29]

The practice was fairly simple. One merely needs to take a candle of an appropriate color (such as green for money, red for love, black for curses, etc), anoint it with a related dressing oil (Money Drawing Oil, Healing Oil, Follow Me Girl Oil, Aunt Sally's Lucky Dream Oil, etc), and light it with an appropriate Psalm or statement of intent.[30]

Today, Hoodoo candles are available in a plethora of types and shapes. The most popular are glass-encased seven-day candles with pictures of Saints on their labels. (They usually have a prayer to the Saint on the back of the lable as well.) Some of them are multi-colored for spells designed to have different effects at different stages. You can even buy candles with one color on the outside and another on the inside- for removing jinxes and returning them to their senders. You can even buy

candles shaped like men, women, penises, and other shapes that aid in magickal sympathy with the object of the spell.

It is very unlikely that Hoodoo is in the same danger of dying out as Pow-wow. (This is likely due to the fact that Pow-wow put heavier restrictions upon its transmission.) As Hoodoo once disseminated itself through mail-order catalogues, it is now gaining popularity through the Internet. Websites like the Lucky Mojo Curio Co.[31] make the obscure spell ingredients, altar tools, talismans, and books easy to find.

Rootworking and conjure-magick is alive and well. One reviewer of *Secrets of the Magickal Grimoires* suggested the release of my book was well timed, because it met with an "...increased interest in operative magic..."[32] I suppose what they meant by that was a rising interest in good old-fashioned witchcraft. The kind of folk-magick that requires a crossroads at midnight and railroad spikes, rather than initiations and lodge-style ceremonies. The kind of magick our ancestors used and passed on to their children, but was sacrificed to "scientific reason" and the nuclear family before our generation came along. As the world becomes an increasingly hostile and dangerous place, perhaps the younger generations desire to reconnect to the healing spells, protective spirits and results-oriented "operative magick" we have lost.

The Modern Solomonic Path

In this essay, we have traced grimoiric shamanism from medieval times to the present day, and we have seen that it followed two specific paths: One path was with the Masons and Hermeticists. They eventually borrowed the grimoires' talismans and words of power, but applied them to their own lodge-style magick. The second path was with the immigrants who took the grimoires with them to the New World, packaged with their native folklore. However, they also ignored the ritual instructions in favor of the talismans and words.

The modern Solomonic Path differs from these in that it does not eschew the instructions recorded in the grimoires. The

purifications and preparations, robes and magickal tools, conjurations and ceremonies are what define the Solomonic Path. However, at the same time, the Solomonic mage is just as interested in the "rootworking" aspects of the grimoires that have been dismissed by the magickal lodges. The wax images, virgin-spun thread, sacred herbs, etc.

The Solomonic mages in medieval Europe had borrowed what they could from local pagan folklore. Likewise, modern Solomonic mages are drawing pagan material from systems like European folk-magick, the African Diaspora religions and Hoodoo. (In fact, the practice of borrowing material from European and African folklore is a hallmark of Hoodoo itself.)

When I began to explore the Solomonic material (during the 1990s), I was unfamiliar with the traditions of Pow-wow and Hoodoo. I knew that Pow-wow existed, but I knew very little about it and had no idea it was connected to the medieval grimoires. Of Hoodoo I knew even less - except for a vague understanding that some members of the Afro-Caribbean communities were using the *Books of Moses* and possibly a few other medieval European texts. In fact, I had heard there was a growing "Solomonic trend" within these communities, though I had no clue where this movement was taking place.

For some years, I had used the grimoires in the modern ceremonial fashion; with acceptable results. I knew it was not a true reflection of the magick presented in the medieval texts - however, the grimoires were not easy to understand on their own terms. Besides being jumbled and obscurely worded, they were missing a lot of material that had likely been transmitted orally from teacher to student. Plus, their instructions often directly contradicted what I "knew" to be true about magick.

Eventually, I stumbled upon Santeria and Palo Mayombe through a friend who had been initiated into both faiths. At first, my interest in his knowledge was purely academic. I love to speak with people of differing faiths and worldviews, and especially of

different magickal systems, in order to widen my own perspective. In this case, I was wildly successful - because my discussions with the Santero radically altered my worldview. Those long conversations were my first real introduction to magickal principals outside the influence of Neopaganism or the Golden Dawn. It was my first direct encounter with established systems of shamanism.

It all came together when the Santero and I realized that his descriptions of African-descended magick were coming awfully close to my descriptions of the *Book of Abramelin*, the *Key of Solomon* and several other grimoires. Agrippa's *Occult Philosophy* did not contradict his own at all. (He was particularly fascinated by Book I of the Three Books... - dealing with "natural magick," or what we have been calling folk-magick.) Many aspects of the grimoires that made no sense to me, and were often called "blinds" by others, were perfectly logical when viewed through his shamanic worldview. (Frog skin? Blood from a black cat? Ritual sacrifice??)

Before long, I was bringing the grimoires to him for clarification. I would ask him about the obscured and missing aspects of Solomonic magick, and he would fill in the gaps by describing similar practices in Santeria or Palo. He could tell me why certain things were done, and even where to find the obscure ingredients. (The co-relations were so close, I began to suspect the African and Solomonic traditions had crossed paths before.) Eventually, my girlfriend decided to explore the path of Palo with my friend as her spiritual god brother, and the two of them have been invaluable sources of information and practical experience ever since.[33]

In some cases, the grimoires and folk traditions like Hoodoo match almost exactly. A great example is the parallel folklore about crossroads found within both. Hoodoo teaches that a crossroads at midnight is a place of convergence - between days, human destinies and "between the worlds" of human and spirit.

At the crossroads, spirits are met, deals are made and power is gained.[34]

Meanwhile, grimoires like the *Key of Solomon the King* insist that evocations (especially necromancy or goetic work) are best performed at a crossroads "during the depth and silence of the night." [35]In *The Magus*, we find an operation for binding a number of familiar spirits to a magickal book - including both a crossroads and the hour of midnight.[36] One is to prepare the book with all the prayers and conjurations necessary to call the spirits. Then, at a crossroads at midnight, one must prepare a magickal circle. The book is consecrated and the spirits are summoned. The book must then be buried in the center of the crossroads and (after wiping away all traces of the circle) left for three days. On the third night, one must return again at midnight, reform the circle, offer prayers of thanks and retrieve the book. That is the kind of magick any good rootworker can appreciate!

We can find even more examples of folk magick in Agrippa's *Occult Philosophy*, Book I, "Natural Magic."[37] In fact, I would suggest that it stands on its own as a root-worker's manual- especially for someone geared toward the Solomonic path. It is certainly the most neglected book of Agrippa's trilogy, merely wanting rediscovery by modern aspirants.

A wonderful example is found in Chapter 16, "How the operations of several Virtues pass from one thing into another, and are communicated one to the other":

Therefore they say that if any one shall put on the inward garment of an Harlot, or shall have about him that looking glass, which she daily looks into, he shall thereby become bold, confident, impudent, and wanton. In like manner they say, that a cloth that was about a dead Corpse hath received from thence the property of sadness, and melancholy; and that the halter wherewith a man was hanged hath certain wonderfull properties.

[...] If any shall put a green Lizard made blind, together with Iron, or Gold Rings into a glass-vessel, putting under them some earth, and then shutting the vessel, and when it appears that the Lizard hath received his sight, shall put him out of the glass, that those Rings shall help sore eyes. The same may be done with Rings, and a weasel, whose eyes after they are with any kind of prick put out, it is certain are restored to sight again. Upon the same account Rings are put for a certain time in the nest of Sparrows, or Swallows, which afterwards are used to procure love, and favor.

This sounds like something one would expect to read in a *Hexenmeister's* receipt-book. It is an example of sympathetic magick- or "like attracts like"- the hallmark of most primitive shamanic and folk traditions.

Agrippa makes much of magickal sympathy in his book on Natural Magick. Another example can be found in Chapter 19, "How the Virtues of things are to be tried and found out..."

Moreover thou must consider that the Vertues of things are in some things according to the species, as boldness, and courage in a Lyon, & Cock: fearfulness in a Hare, or Lamb, ravenousness in a Wolf, treachery, and deceitfulness in a Fox... So is boldness in a Harlot, fearfulness in a Thief. And upon this account it is that Philosophers say, that any particular thing that never was sick, is good against any manner of sickness: therefore they say that a bone of a dead man, who never had a fever, being laid upon the patient, frees him of his quartane.

Extending from this philosophy of sympathy, we find healing practices in faiths like Santeria wherein an animal (usually a bird) is applied to the body to "absorb" a sickness. This is described by Agrippa in Chapter 21, "Of the Virtues of things which are in them only in their lifetime...":

So they say that in the Colick, if a live Duck be applyed to the belly, it takes away the pain, and her self dies.

Agrippa gives many further examples in Chapter 51, "Of Certain Observations, Producing Wonderfull Virtues":

So they say that quartanes may be driven away if the parings of the nails of the sick be bound to the neck of a live Eel in a linen cloth, and she be let go into the water. And Pliny saith, that the paring of a sick mans nailes of his feet, and hands being mixed with wax, cure the quartan, tertian, and quotidian Ague, and if they be before Sun rising fastened to another mans gate, will cure such like diseases. In like manner let all the parings of the nailes be put into [anthills], and they say that that which begun to draw the nailes first must be taken, and bound to the neck, and by this means will the disease be removed. They say that by Wood stricken with lightning, and cast behind the back with ones hands, any disease may be cured...

Also the Spleen of Cattle extended upon pained Spleens, cures them, if he that applies it, saith that he is applying a medicine to the Spleen to cure, and ease it: After this, they say, the patient must be shut into a sleeping room, the door being sealed up with a Ring, and some verse be repeated over nineteen times.

I find the following quote - from the same chapter - to be particularly fascinating from the root-working perspective:

It is said also in gathering roots and herbs, we must draw three circles round about them, first with a sword, then dig them up, taking heed in the mean time of a contrary wind.

Space prohibits me from giving more excerpts - though I certainly could continue at some length. Agrippa continues to describe auguries by animals, the power of "enchantments" (incantations), and many more tidbits of use to modern sorcerers. The entire book discusses the philosophies behind Natural Magick in depth - all based upon the four Elements and the seven Planets.

As we can see, there is plenty of material within Solomonic literature to appeal to members of Afro-Carribean religions and Hoodoo rootworkers. For this reason, it would seem, the modern Solomonic movement has become wedded to a parallel "ATR"

(African Tribal Religion) movement.

There is currently a growing interest in the ATRs, as cultural intermixing in America has slowly opened them to Caucasians.[38] Many are taking the full initiations, while some are choosing the Hoodoo route of merely drawing folklore and folk-magick from the religions. The modern Solomonic sorcerer *usually* falls into the latter category, though I know of some Diaspora full-initiates who also engage in Solomonic practice.

Therefore, when we encounter the records of a modern grimoiric practitioner, we are likely to find a kind of hybrid between Solomonic magick and African rootworking. Let us take a look at some examples:

Fig. 7: The Pentagram of Solomon

The *Goetia* tells us that King Solomon bound spirits into a brass vessel. The book also tells us how to make a brass vessel of our own, including the Hebrew Divine Names and the Seal of

Solomon. However, it tells us nothing at all about what to do with the thing. One can assume the vessel should be placed in the Triangle of conjuration (with the spirit's sigil traced on the ground beneath it), and perhaps a metallic seal of the spirit placed inside.

Beyond that, where it comes to working with such a spirit in a vessel, the grimoire is silent.

Meanwhile, if we look to Palo we also find familiar spirits bound to vessels, called *ngangas*, and a practice backed by an elaborate and ancient tradition. They know the secret ingredients to include *inside* the vessel to provide a living environment for the spirit. They know how to feed and care for it. And they know how to get it to work for them.

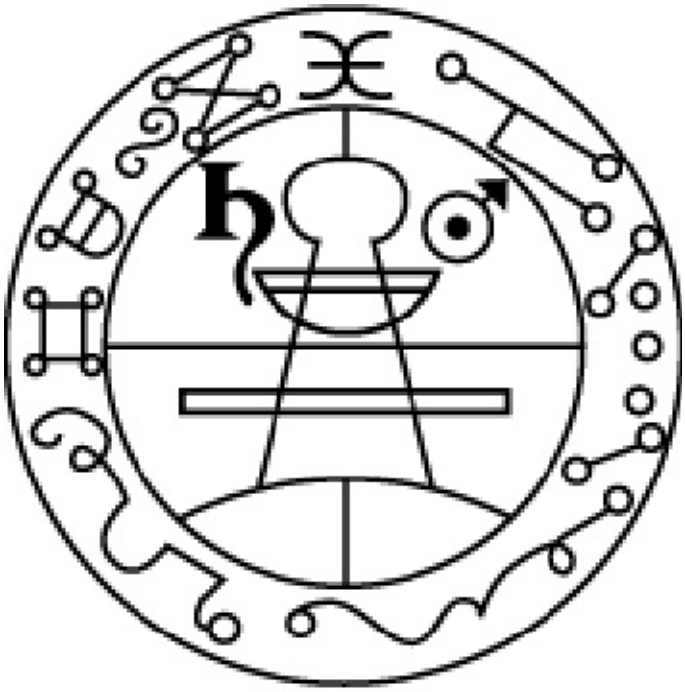

Fig 8: The Secret Seal of Solomon

The modern Solomonic mage can draw from such lore to 'flesh out' the instructions of the *Goetia*. The brass vessel could include its own set of ingredients to provide the Goetic spirit with a harmonious environment. A Goetic "King" (a Solar spirit) like Belial would be in sympathy with the metals gold (from which his Seal should be made) and pyrite, solary plants (like saffron, sunflower, laurel and frankincense) and solar stones (such as

ruby, yellow topaz and carbuncle). Small figurines of a sun, a hawk, a king, a scepter, and/or a throne (and better if they are fashioned from gold) can be included.

Also, dirt from places like local hospitals, courthouses, police stations, etc. will grant the spirit a direct astral link with the places from which the dirt was taken. This gives the shaman some amount of protection from and influence over the organizations at those locations.

Adding fresh hot peppers to the vessel is an obscure secret. Paleros include them to add "spiritual heat" to their *Ngangas*; to excite the spirit and discourage it from lapsing into sleep.

Further ingredients could be included, such as tools for the spirit to work with. A writer would make sure to include a pen and paper. An artist could add a paintbrush and easel. A police officer could include a badge and bullet, or even a gun. Much like the dirt, the tools you give the spirit will give it influence over the arts that utilize those tools.

Santeria makes use of a special water it calls *Omiero* as a kind of offering to newborn Orishas. Simply put, it is water that has been strained through sacred herbs while a Santero sings shamanic songs over it. The Santero then uses this sacred water to wash the Orisha's sacred objects before sealing them in an urn. The practice appeared in Hoodoo in the form of various herbal washes- usually sold in the catalogues as floor washes and baths. They can even be purchased today.[39] Or one could make their own by straining Solomonic holy water through herbs sympathetic to the spirit (i.e.solary herbs for Belial, etc). For the right Psalms to chant, one could reference *Secrets of the Psalms*[40] and/or read up on Psalmody in *Secrets of the Magickal Grimoires*.[41] Then, the resulting water could be used to wash the objects placed into the vessel, and even poured directly into the vessel itself during the Conjuration.

After the Goetia's conjuration rites are complete, the brass vessel could be placed on a simple altar or shelf decorated in sympathy with the spirit; objects, colors, stones, plants, etc. Light a candle and incense when consulting the spirit, and don't forget to feed it![42]

I'm afraid I must now bring this discussion to a close. If you are a Solomonic mage, I hope these practical examples have fired your imagination. If you are a student or aspirant seeking to discover the "Solomonic Path", I hope I have given you some idea of the spirit behind the tradition and its history. (Make sure to explore the links in the footnotes!)

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Notes

1. See http://kheph777.tripod.com/secrets_chap1.html for an introduction to the medieval grimoires.

2. In fact, one of the grimoires- the Book of Abramelin- chronicles the journeys of one Aspirant who investigates all of these sources in his quest for the True and Sacred Magick. See Mathers (1975).

During the medieval period, both Gnosticism and Hermeticism were nearly dormant, and Rosicrucianism had yet to be introduced. These three, along with the Christian Qabalah, would arise later during the renaissance era and become the foundations of Christian Mysticism.

3. Paper was invented in China in the first century CE. However, they guarded the secret of its manufacture for quite some time, and the technology did not reach Europe until the 13th Century.

This is the late medieval period. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paper#History

4. See http://www.templeofastarte.com/ for the Order of the Temple of Astarte.

5. Regardie 1985, p.402; Kraig 2002, pp.371-420; Runyon 1996; Konstantinos 2003.

6. Excerpts from John Hohman's Pow-Wows, or the Long Lost Friend. See http://www.locksley.com/llf/

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

12. In the Key of Solomon the King, see the Second Pentacle of Saturn (where the square is written with Hebrew letters).

In the Book of Abramelin, see Book III, Chapter Nineteen (For Every Description of Affection and Love), the ninth Talisman (By a Maiden in General). The square is there written:

S A L O M
A R E P O
L E M E L

O P E R A
M O L A S

The earliest known appearance of the SATOR / ROTAS magickal square was in first-century Pompeii, where it was written on a the wall of a residence, as "graffiti." (It was more likely someone casting a Roman folk-magick spell.)

13. For further discussion of the folk use of the SATOR square,

see Strasser (1999)

14. Hohman, op. cit.

15. Ibid. for further discussion of the migration of German mysticism to America.

16. Yronwode (1996, Online), "Admixtures: European, Spiritist and Kabbalist Influences on Hoodoo."

17. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pow-wow_%28folk_magic%29 for a short introduction to the subject of American "Pow-wow" magick; also Kriebel (2002, Online) for a lengthy discussion of the Pow Wow tradition.

18. However, the receipt books would become source-books for later spiritual traditions. No doubt, Gerald Gardner and the

founders of British Traditional Wicca had access to such books (the "family traditions" to which many of them laid claim?) and drew much witchcraft lore from them.

19. Kriebel, op. cit.
20. In Leitch (2005), I made a small case for the idea that the African religions had affected the European grimoires during the time of their writing. If this is the case, then the favor was returned in the New World once the African Diaspora religions began to adopt material from the grimoires.

21. Alastor 2003, Online.

22. Yronwode 1996, Online; Grasso 2004, Online.

23. Yronwode 1996, Online, Powwows - http://www.luckymojo.com/powwows.html

24. Even today, you can purchase the Seals from the Books of Moses in Botanicas or even from online curio suppliers. See http://www.indioproducts.com/webstore/index.php?cPath=580 for an example.

25. We can see this throughout the Key of Solomon the King, as well as other medieval grimoires both Christian and Jewish.

26. Yronwode 1996, Online., “Secrets of the Psalms: The Kabbalist Influence on Hoodoo” - http://www.luckymojo.com/secretspsalms.html

27. See Barret (Online), Book II, "Of The Consecration Of All Magical Instruments And Materials Which Are Used In This Art." - "Then in the prayer by which the consecration is made it derives its virtue either from divine inspiration, or else by composing it from sundry places in the holy Scriptures, in the commemoration of some of the wonderful miracles of God, effects, promises, sacraments and sacramental things, of which we have abundance in holy writ."

28. See Yronwode (1996, Online), “The Enduring Occult Mystery of Lewis de Claremont, Louis de Clermont, Henri Gamache, Joe Kaye, Joseph Spitalnick, Black Herman, Benjamin Rucker, and the elusive Mr. Young.”

29. Grasso, op. cit.

30. Again, Wiccan scholars may wish to take note, as this could be the origins of modern Neopagan and New Age candle magick.

For Hoodoo anointing oils, see
http://www.luckymojo.com/mojocatoils.html#hoodoo

For Hoodoo ritual candles, see
http://www.luckymojo.com/mojocatcandles.html

31. See http://www.luckymojo.com/catalogue.html

32. Stavish 2005, Online.

33. Both of them appear in the acknowledgements for Secrets of the Magickal Grimoires, as their influence is found throughout the book.

34. Grasso, op.cit.

35. Mathers (1975), Book II, Chapter 7, "Of Places Wherein We May Conveniently Execute the Experiments and Operations of the Art"

36. Barret (Online), Book II: The Perfection and Key of the Cabala, or Ceremonial Magic, "Of the Invocation of Evil Spirits, and the Binding of and Constraining of Them to Appear."

37. Agrippa, Online.

38. As always, the Internet is helping this along. Plus, there was an entirely new Diaspora in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina - which spread the lower classes of New Orleans across America.

This should result in further dissemination of Afro-Caribbean folklore.

39. See http://www.luckymojo.com/mojocatbaths.html

40. Selig (1958). The original version of this book, *Schimmusch Tehillim, or the Use of the Psalms*, can be found online here: http://www.esotericarchives.com/moses/67moses2.htm#appendix4

41. Leitch (2005).

42. See Mathers (2005, Online), Book II, Chapter 23, "Concerning sacrifices to the spirits, and how they should be made." I would feed the spirit at the time the Goetia prescribes for its conjuration.